

Blogging As A Business

Presented By

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Introduction

If you've spent any time surfing blogs, then you may think of a blog as place for people to make inane observations about life. And while some of these blogs are fun to read, just look a little closer and you'll realize that many of them are labors of love.

In other words, these blogs don't make squat for their owners. They don't even pay for the hosting fees.

Kind of depressing, eh?

Especially if you've been looking at blogging as a way to pick up some extra cash.

And that's where this report comes in.

Welcome to "**Blogging as a Business**" – **your quick-start guide to starting a profitable blog!**

In just minutes you'll discover:

- ✓ How to pick an in-demand, hot niche so you always have plenty of readers.
- ✓ How to get your blog up and running (even if you don't have tech skills).
- ✓ How to start create blogs posts that your visitors will rave about.
- ✓ How to attract new readers so you can start turning your content into cash.

So let's start taking the steps towards creating a profitable blog for you...

Step 1: Pick a Niche

There are some topics that might be near and dear to your heart, but there simply isn't a big enough audience to make it profitable for you. And there are other topics that have big audiences, but the audiences are unwilling or unable to spend money – which means these also aren't good choices around which to start a blog.

So what you're looking for is a hungry niche. This means there are people in the niche who're ALREADY spending money. And it also means there are other bloggers and

marketers in the niche who're creating products and advertising their offers. Point is, you find evidence of people spending money (either buying products and/or buying advertising), and you'll have found yourself a profitable niche.

Now, this is actually a two-step process:

1. Brainstorm Niches

If you already have a niche in mind, great – then all you have to do is move on to Step 1.2 to make sure that niche is profitable. Otherwise, you need to start by brainstorming possible niches. Here are three ways to do it:

- **Think about your own problems, interests, hobbies, etc.** What books do you read? What are your favorite topics of conversation? What do you like to do in your spare time?
- **Now think about the problems, interest and hobbies of your friends, family and coworkers.**
- **Pay attention to the news.** What topics are coming up a lot?

Example: Did you just read about bride fat-loss boot camps? Or backpacking through Italy? Or building solar panels?

2. Discover Which of These Niches are Profitable

Now that you have a big list of niches, your next step is to see if they're profitable. Again, you're looking for evidence that the niche is already spending money to solve their problems. Specifically:

- Are there a lot of books on your topic in the Clickbank.com marketplace?
- Are there physical books and magazines on your topic? (Hint: Check Amazon.com.)

Tip: If you find books and magazines in the niche, that means that people are already paying for information on your prospective topic. That's a good sign that there's a hungry market.

- When you run a search in Google for your topic, are there a lot of blogs and other websites? And do they have advertising on these sites?
- When you flip through niche-relevant magazines, do you see plenty of ads (evidence that people are spending money in the niche)?

If you follow the tips above, you should be able to first brainstorm a big list of niches, and then narrow this list down to only those niches which are profitable.

Pick one and move to the next step...

Step 2: Set Up a Blog

Once you have a niche in mind, then your next step is to set up your blog.

Now, you might be tempted to just get a free blog using a third-party blog platform like Blogger or Tumblr, but *don't* do it.

Most of these third-party platforms specifically prohibit commercial activity. And even if a third-party host does allow commercial content and links, you still shouldn't use these solutions.

Why?

Because you don't control the property.

And that means that your blog could completely disappear one night – and you'd have no recourse, no way of getting it back and no way of letting your blog readers know what happened. If your blog was fairly well-established, you wouldn't just lose content – you'd also lose your livelihood.

So let's skip that option.

Instead, what you need to do is set up a blog on a website property that you control.

This means that yes, you need to get your own domain name ([GoDaddy](#)) and webhosting ([BlueHost](#)).

Besides being able to control the property, the other advantage is that you pick the domain name – which means you can work on branding your business.

Once you have your domain name and hosting lined up, then you need to install the blog. Web hosts like BlueHost.com allow you to do this in just a few clicks through your host's control panel (which you can access by going to yourdomain.com/cpanel – replacing "yourdomain.com" with your actual domain name).

Simply scroll down to "Software/Services" in your cPanel and click on "*Fantastico De Luxe*." You'll then see the option on the left side to install a WordPress blog. Alternatively, you can go to WordPress.org to download the files and installation instructions.

The default WordPress theme (design) is fairly bland. Fortunately, you can change the theme to one that's more suitable in just a few clicks. You can browse over 1500 different themes here: <http://wordpress.org/extend/themes/>.

Better yet, after your blog is installed you can browse them directly through your WordPress blog dashboard. Once you're logged into your dashboard, look for the "*Appearances -> Themes*" option on the left side of your dashboard. You'll then be able to browse and install any of the themes at the link above directly from your dashboard – no tech skills or knowledge required.

Tip: Are you not very technically minded? Or do you just need more guidance on this issue? Hire someone at www.Elance.com to handle it all for you.

Once your blog is up and running, the next step is to draw up a profitability plan...

Step 3: Monetize Your Blog

Now here's where it starts getting exciting. Because unlike those bloggers where teenagers share their angst-filled thoughts, you're blogging as a business.

You're looking to turn your content into cold, hard cash. And that means you need to create a plan as to how you're going to monetize your blog.

Let me share with you the following three ways to do it:

1. Sell Your Own Offers

Do you have your own products or services? If so, then your blog is a natural outlet for advertising these offers. And best of all, there are plenty of ways for you to promote your offers on your blog, including:

- **Using graphical ads.** You can place banners and graphics of all sizes in your header, side bar, footer and even between the content.

Note: A word of warning, however: Just don't stuff your blog so full of graphical ads that it looks like a circus rather than a blog. You want a new visitor to notice that you have great content – not that your blog is full of ads.

- **Using text ads.** You can place your text ads in the same places you put your graphical ads. Same rules apply – don't overdo it. Your blog should be about great content and not be overwhelmed by ads.
- **By embedding promotions in the content.** This is often one of the best ways to advertise your offers, because it puts your ads directly in front of your readers. In other words, you can create blog posts which contain promotions.

Now, this doesn't mean that you fill your blog posts with direct promotions. While it's ok to post a direct promotion from time to time, it's certainly not something you'd want to do too much. After all, your blog readers are coming to your blog for the great content – not the ads.

Instead, you can weave your offers directly into useful content.

Example: If you're writing a "how to" article about how to lose weight, you might have a step that talks about reducing calories. You can then include a link for your low-calorie cookbook.

2. Promote Affiliate Products

If you don't have your own products or services to sell, no problem.

Another option is for you to promote affiliate products on your blog. This includes:

- **Digital products**, such as those found at Clickbank.com. These are often some of the best products to promote, simply because they usually have high commission rates (50% or more).
- **Physical products.** Because of the overhead and fulfillment costs associated with physical products, these tend to have low commission rates – as little as 5% or 10%. However, depending on what you're selling you may have high conversion rates, especially if you sell through a trusted vendor like Amazon.com.
- **Services.** These also tend to have lower commission rates, simply because the vendor is trading his or her time for dollars. There are exceptions, such as certain services which the vendor may have automated or otherwise found out how to do at a low cost.
- **Subscriptions.** Some programs (such as membership sites) rebill their members on a weekly or monthly basis. And some of these programs also award recurring commissions to affiliates. This means that if you sell the program once, you get paid again and again for as long as your referral remains a member of the program.

Here's a hint: Whether you're selling your own offers or you're promoting affiliate offers, it's a good idea to start a mailing list.

That's because only a very tiny minority – we're talking single digits – will buy what you're promoting.

So if you send your visitors directly to the vendor's sales page, you won't get any benefit. The visitor won't buy, so you won't get any commission. And the visitor may not return to your blog. Thus you should seek to get your visitors onto a mailing list so that you can follow up with them again and again.

3. Sell Advertising

Yet another way to monetize your blog is to sell advertising to other marketers in your niche. Here you can sell banner ads and other graphic ads, text ads, links (especially if your blog has a high Google Page Rank), and even ads embedded directly in your content.

The benefit of this particular monetization method is that you get cash in your pocket no matter what happens with the offer. In other words, you're not in charge of writing

ad copy or trying to figure out how to get your visitors to buy an offer. All you have to do is sell the advertising space and let your advertisers take care of the details.

And of course you can certainly use more than one method at any time. You just need to do a little testing to see which methods bring you the greatest revenue.

Once you've planned out your initial monetization plans, then move on to the next step...

Step 4: Start Blogging

Right now your blog is just a skeleton, a platform waiting for you to start filling it up with content. And that's exactly what you're going to do in this step.

I want you to do two things:

- 1. Populate your blog with at least six posts.** That's right, I want you to write and publish at least six posts initially. That's because it "fills up" the front page of your blog and makes your blog look busy.

Think about it. If you just have one or two articles on your blog when your first visitors start streaming in, it's unlikely those visitors will come back. Your blog looks dead. So give your visitors a good reason to come back by giving them some of your best advice in those initial six posts.

- 2. Commit to blogging regularly.** Once you've populated your blog initially, then you should commit to blogging at least once a week. Depending on your blog, you may even do it more often (even daily). But the point is, make a schedule and commit to it.

Now let me share with you three tips for creating good blog content...

Tip #1: Write Engaging Content

Do you remember some of those text books you read back in school? You know what I'm talking about, the ones where you had to struggle to keep your eyes open? You'd read the same passage over and over because you just couldn't focus on the dry, dull text.

Heads up – do NOT create blog posts like that!

Instead, you need to create posts that educate your readers while entertaining them. If your posts are entertaining without being useful, you're not giving your readers what they want, so they won't be back.

If your posts are useful without being entertaining, your readers will likely seek out sources that are a joy to read.

So how do you make your content engaging? Like this:

- **Tell stories.** Don't just give a step-by-step process. Instead, tell a story. Personalize it. Find the "human interest" angle and milk it.
- **Get interviews.** Turn to the experts and ask for interviews. Just edit out the boring parts of the interview so that your readers (or listeners) stay engaged.
- **Use plenty of tips and examples.** This is a great way to make complex concepts more understandable.
- **Insert multi-media.** You may do a lot of text-based posts, but try throwing in a video or podcast from time to time.

Tip #2: Create Content That Encourages Interaction

If you create useful and entertaining posts, then there's a good chance that your blog readers will naturally start commenting on your content. But to increase the interaction, you can use these three tips:

- **Encourage comments.** This is where you specifically tell your readers to comment or you ask for their opinion. For example, you might add this to the end of your post: "What's your take on this issue?"
- **Publish "comment worthy" content.** No one is going to fall all over themselves to comment on a "how to" piece that they've seen hundreds of times before. But make offer a novel strategy or make a controversial post, and you might just see your blog light up with comments!
- **Post interactive features.** This includes features like polls, surveys or anything else to get your readers involved.

Tip #3: Offer Regular Features

The final tip is that you should create regular features that you post on a weekly basis, such as “The Tuesday Tip” (where you share one really good tip) or “The Friday Round Up” (where you share the best news tidbits and blog posts from the week).

There are two benefits to creating these weekly features:

- **Makes your site sticky.** These features give your readers something to look forward to. And that means these visitors will come back again and again, just to see what you’ve posted in this week’s feature.
- **Commits you to blogging regularly.** Yes, it’s a bit of a psychological, which works to keep you motivated to stay on track. Basically, if you’re so much as a few hours late on posting your regular feature, you’re very likely to get your regular readers asking why you haven’t posted it yet. And that’s very motivating!

Once you populated your blog with some good content, then you can move on to the next step...

Step 5: Get Traffic

Great content and a good profitability plan mean nothing if no one is around to see your blog! That’s why you need to start pulling in traffic – and lots of it.

Here are three ways to do it...

Swap Content With Other Bloggers

The idea here is to be a guest blogger on someone else’s blog – and they can provide a guest article on your blog too.

This is a win-win situation:

1. **You get traffic.** That’s because when you provide a guest article for someone else, you get an author’s byline. This is where you can promote and link to your blog. This is why you should focus on finding high-profile blogs in your niche that have a lot of traffic and activity.

- 2. You get free content.** If you're swapping content, then you'll get a free article to post on your blog. Ask the author if they'll give you an exclusive article, which will make it even more valuable. And if this article comes from a well-known expert in your niche, that's even better!

The key to making this strategy work is to make sure you're getting your articles published on blogs that serve the same niche as you do.

So if you publish a blog about toy poodles, then seek out other poodle blogs, toy poodle blogs, and blogs about training other toy dogs.

Tell Your Contacts About Your Blog

In other words, tell everyone you know about your blog. This includes:

- Your Facebook contacts.
- Your Twitter followers.
- Your friends and family (by email, phone, in person).
- Your colleagues.

And anyone else you know. Just don't spam anyone – meaning don't email casual acquaintances about your blog, as they might take it as an unsolicited commercial message.

In addition:

- Ask your friends and family to spread the news by telling their friends.
- Ask your social media contacts to re-post or re-tweet your announcement.
- Ask those who have their own blogs or mailing lists to tell their readers about your blog.

Use Forum Signature Files

Yet another way to promote your blog is by advertising it on forums.

No, this doesn't mean that you spam forums. And you don't even have to place a paid advertisement.

Rather, every time you post in the forum your ad shows up in your signature file.

Note: A signature file is the text that gets automatically appended to the end of each of your forum posts. Some people use these spaces to simply put their name and maybe a little bit about themselves. Where permitted, you can add an advertisement and a link to your blog.

Just be sure to read the forum rules before you join to see if commercial messages are allowed in signature files.

There are three keys to making this strategy successful:

- 1. Pick relevant forums.** Just like the poodle example I gave you before – if you're catering to toy poodle owners, then find forums that cater to this same group.
- 2. Participate thoughtfully.** A forum is a community, so other members tend to pay more attention to those who participate thoughtfully. This means answering other peoples' questions and being as helpful as possible. When you become a respected member of the community, you'll get more clicks on your signature file.
- 3. Prepare a good signature file.** You need to give people a good reason to click on your link.

Example: "Click here to find out how to housetrain your poodle in three days or less!" Or, "Here's my #1 secret for getting rid of belly fat.."

One final tip: There are probably a lot of forums in your niche, so focus on the high-traffic, high-activity forums that are likely to give you signature file a lot of exposure.

Now let's wrap things up...

Conclusion

Congratulations – you now know how to start blogging as a business in five quick steps. Let's recap:

Step 1: Pick a Niche. If you're blogging as a business, then you need to start by picking a profitable niche.

Step 2: Set Up a Blog. Here you found out how to get your own WordPress blog up and running.

Step 3: Monetize the Blog. In this step you discovered three solid ways to turn your words into money in the bank.

Step 4: Start Blogging. This is where you discovered how to write engaging content that keeps your readers coming back for more.

Step 5: Get Traffic. Finally, this is an ongoing step that you'll use to keep bringing fresh visitors to your blog.

This is a good foundation to get you started – just follow the steps above and you'll be up and blogging in no time! But remember...

There are plenty of well-intentioned folks who start blogs and then end up abandoning them. Just take a look around your niche and you'll see dozens if not hundreds of blogs where the owner hasn't made a post in months, maybe even in years.

Why? Probably because the blogger just couldn't make the blog work. The blog didn't make any money. And so the blogger simply couldn't afford to keep maintaining a blog that doesn't put money in his pocket.

Don't let your blog fall into this internet graveyard.

Don't become a slave to a blog that doesn't pay you.

Don't work *on your blog* – instead, make your blog work **FOR YOU!**

To Your Massive Online Success!

Connie Ragen Green

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